

7666
R
THE SOUL'S PEACE AND ASSURANCE.

BY THE

REV. D. SUTHERLAND,
NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY H. & J. PILLANS,
6 JAMES'S COURT.

1869.

5183

NS

252.4

S

IN giving the following Discourses to the public, the Author
is sincere in saying that he desires the glory of God supremely
from the perusal of them.

1901

SERMON I.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. v. 1.

THE Apostle in the treatment of this Epistle to the Romans opens up the most profound and sacred doctrines of our heavenly religion. He lays open both Jews and Gentiles to the righteous language of God's most holy law; for, in his own words, "whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be guilty before God." He comes, in the words of our text, to speak of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; and proclaims the welcome and glorious truth, that "believers, being justified by faith, have peace with God," and present joy, and he goes on to say that they have assurance of eternal life.

In following up this subject, it shall be our aim, *firstly*, to show what our state as natural souls in this world, and with reference to our need of righteousness, may be; *secondly*, what our justification means; *thirdly*, how we are said to be justified by faith; *fourthly*, the nature of the peace this puts us in possession of, or at least ensures us of; and in the *fifth* and *last* place, and by way of application, the treasure house and direction through which the blessings flow to us, viz., through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. In the first place then, "what is our estate as natural souls in this world, and with reference to our need of righteousness?" One thing is clear and needs no lengthened argument, and that is, that all are sinners by nature as they come into, and live of themselves, in this world, and consequently all are condemned and exposed at all times and every moment to God's righteous judgments. This is the teaching of universal experience and observation; and most assuredly it is the teaching of the word of Divine Truth. When we say it is the teaching of universal experience, we are not supposed to say that men's confessions afford a clear index of their ex-

periences, or that their experiences are at all times equally lively and just in their testimony. Many men's hearts are hardened, and their consciences are seared, or rendered obtuse and insensible by the practice of sin, so that their convictions have come to be suppressed altogether, or they are not keen and just as they once were. Yet, upon the whole, we are safe in saying, that the general or universal conscience of mankind is conscious or sensible of sin; and refers to a righteous sentence of condemnation passed by God upon all, for that all have sinned. Now, this, as it is a fact that is almost self-evident from the language of men's lives and religious convictions and experiences, so it is a doctrine that is clearly taught in God's word. Man's soul heard the sentence of condemnation and displeasure against sin and the sinner. His conscience says so,—says so in every man more or less powerfully and distinctly; and what conscience does not make audible in the ear now, it once did, and it will do so again on a coming day. "The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty, the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." Nothing can cover away from the voice of Jehovah. Adam could not resist his call in the garden; the devils could not remain mute to his voice in the person of his Son walking our earth; the evil conscience cannot be still, there is no rest to its speech; and God's own people will not tire nor weary of the language of filial duty and piety. Every knee must bow and every tongue confess to the glory of God the Father.

Blessed be God, he makes honest cause with us, and tells us plainly, and in time, and without any deception, and therefore in perfectly truthful and friendly terms, that all have sinned, and fallen utterly short of the glory which he had in view in our original creation in righteousness and holiness. What we have some notion of already he comes and proclaims plainly in his word. The law of God and the lessons of every day fact and experience agree in harmony in the following sentence upon man, in a state of nature, and without the Spirit of God or faith in Christ, viz:—"There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open

sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now, we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." By this we understand that sin is charged against all men—their own sins, together with the depravity of the entire nature. And sin brings with it the condemnation and curse of God. And where these are, there is death inflicted upon soul and body for ever, or until the guilt is removed and our friendship with God is for us re-established by the righteousness of another, and that other not a sinner himself, but the spotless Lamb of God. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

II. Here, in the second place, let us enquire what our justification means. We are sinners. In a man's being justified is contained, *firstly*, the idea of pardon. What God first does is to pardon the sins of the sinner that believes in Jesus. He does this in his infinite mercy. What secures his pardon to the sinner, is his union with Christ by faith. The Father pardons, with overflowing love, every repentant and returning sinner. He has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. He is pleased, and the angels of heaven rejoice, over one sinner that repenteth. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Jeremiah is charged of God to proclaim the pardon by mercy to backsliding Israel. "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God."

"Pardon from an offended God!

Pardon for sins of deepest dye!

Pardon bestowed through Jesus' blood!

Pardon that brings the rebel nigh!—

Who is a pardoning God like thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?"

Secondly, The next thing in justification, is the accepting of our persons as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. Justification is purely, and from first to last, an act of free grace. It will not do for any one to say, Christ died, God must pardon our sins therefore, and accept of our persons; for this does not follow; necessity is not laid upon God; there is no compulsion; he can do with his own as seemeth proper to him. He had from eternity power to send or not to send his Son to save us; he had power to give me or not to give me to his Son to be by him saved from sin and wrath; all the parts of his gracious design are connected throughout, and he is sovereign and free in all his gifts and acts of mercy done to our souls.

"Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wond'rous plan.

"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone;
Let Grace have all the *praise*."

Christ is God's to give; and the Holy Spirit is his gift to give, to convince and convert us; and faith is the gift of God in like manner; and pardon and acceptance are gracious acts done unto us by the Father, and through his Only Begotten, in whom are stored up all blessings, and gifts, and graces for believers. And it is in the living soul, faith that accepts of these. How humble we should be!

III. How are we justified by faith? The main question is whether it is faith itself that justifies the soul or God? Whether it be faith that is the consideration, or something that faith rests on and lays hold on? Whether it is without righteousness the sinner is justified, either his own or another's, or with or by the righteousness of Christ, for righteousness of his own he has none, and the righteousness of any other, besides Christ, is not sufficient. Speaking correctly and exactly, faith itself merely does not justify; faith is not itself the righteousness that justifies; faith neither justifies

in act or form, nor in material course or substance. It is not free of any consideration that we are justified, for we are sinners, and God cannot gratuitously in his truth and justice say that we are not, and declare us just by perverting facts. Being sinners and depraved, we can never recover his favour and our credit and character in our own persons, and by our unaided services in his sight; for our own hearts condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. For very many reasons, the righteousness of a finite creature, angel or man, either holy or sinful, cannot receive God's approbation and acceptance in our account, and for our justification. However favourable it may seem capable and possible for him to appear towards penitent sinners, yet he cannot prevent the nature and relations of absolute and fixed righteousness and holiness. Consequently, as the Word of God declares, the just shall live by faith, that is, by receiving of the righteousness of Christ, who is styled the Lord our righteousness, and the righteousness of God; and it is with reference to this very thing that the apostle triumphantly exclaims:—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is in the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith." Now, in reference to the manner or act of faith on our part, and that other act, that of justifying on the part of God,—the two are entirely distinct in kind as in effect. God's part is an act of pure grace; our believing act is our plain duty. At the same time, to God belongs the glory of awakening us to our duty, and enabling us and inclining us, by the persuasions of his love, to believe, as it is our duty and delight to do, in Christ Jesus for salvation.

Faith feeds upon and draws its life from the excellencies and glories it discovers in Christ; for the glory of God unfolded in our salvation shines forth in the face of Christ Jesus.

Faith is spoken of as the eye of the soul or mind; it is by this eye, that the awakened and regenerate soul looks upon God and Christ Jesus the Saviour, and beholds the requirements of the holiness and love of God all finding their answer in Christ, and the sinner welcomed to partake; this latter part of the character of God and Christ, arrest the soul's attention; love awakens powerfully in the soul in answer to that love that answers the soul's welcome back to the bosom

of God. The soul now accepts of the donation made by God of his Son, and in the act the soul partakes of all his benefits which he has to bestow. Righteousness is among these, so faith is very properly spoken of in various parts of Scripture, or fleeing away from every resource, and to Christ, receiving of his righteousness; as looking; "Look unto me and be ye saved," all by coming unto Christ: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" as fleeing for refuge; as leaning on God; and rolling the burden of the soul on the Lord; as resting on God; as cleaving unto God; as also by trusting, hoping, and waiting; and most beautifully does Isaiah address the believing soul, and so informs us of the attitude, duty, and high privilege of the soul:—"Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

Faith is the act of the soul; taking, receiving from God what God is pleased graciously to give; it is the act of the poor, needy, sinful soul, impressed with a sense of its loss, and of the infinite mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus, suing and applying with all its powers and faculties to God in Christ, for mercy and acceptance; God in his mere mercy and grace bends his ear to the request of the soul to this purpose awakened by his Holy Spirit, and on the warrant of his own Word crying to him for mercy, in hope of the compassion of the Father; God eyes the sinner in connection with his well-beloved Son, and here eternal friendship is formed. This is figured unto us in the vision concerning Joshua the High Priest:—"And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." It has been generally granted that we have here a representation of the justification of a sinner before God. And the taking away of filthy garments is expressed by the passing away of iniquity. When a man's filthy garments are taken away, he is no more defiled with them; but he is not thereby clothed. This is an additional grace and favour thereunto,—namely, to be clothed with change of garments. And what this garment is, is declared in Is. lxi. 10, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness," Ph. iii. 9. Wherefore

these things are distinct, viz., the taking away of the filthy garments, and the clothing of us with change of raiment; or, the pardon of sin, and the robe of Christ's righteousness. "By the one we are freed from condemnation on account of Christ; by the other we have a right unto salvation on account of Christ in like manner."—*Owen*.

IV. In the fourth place, consider the nature of the peace this puts us in possession of, or at least ensures us of. There are various kinds of peace. There is false peace, and this peace arises from various sources too, and shows itself in various ways and points in various directions; but this kind of peace which after all, however desirable in some phases it may appear, is no peace, we reject from our present consideration.

We refer to the peace spoken of in the text, and say, that it is of various kinds in its subdivisions or elements, and effects or fruits. There is then peace with God; peace with his holy law; peace with our own consciences; peace with God's people; and general habit of a peaceful disposition, or "as much as in us lieth, there is peace with all men." The rest or stock which carries all, however, is the cardinal grace of peace with God. It is a fountain which, with its copious water, supplied numerous streams, all tasting of the same blessed sweetness, and traceable to the grand qualities of the original spring and fountain-head. Christians are commonly easily known by their peaceable disposition, they are at peace among themselves, and they live at peace with all men. Their heavenly and holy religion teaches them peace, they are called the children of peace. "The wisdom which is from above is first pure, and then peaceable," and upon such as are possessed of this peaceable gracious disposition, Jesus pronounced one of his benedictions in his Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The order of peace is the following: the surety obtainin, the balancing and cancelling of our accounts which stand against us, and the quieting of the anger, and paying all the demands of the law against us who believe, and silencing its condemning voice, and the Father acting judge, beholding the rank and merits, and hearing the plea of his Son, with his own concurring love, and great mercy and grace, he proclaims peace in the court of heaven towards the sinner, peace that by sin had been first broken by man foolishly and naughtily, is restored and re-established again for ever by

God; from this time forth there is no more condemnation on the part of God: the sinner, however, may not be in possession of the full information of the fact, and though entitled to peace, it may all the time be troubled and tossed about without any consolation. The spirit of peace, however, it must be remembered, has been made keeper and occupant, and messenger in the soul to represent and conduct the interests of heaven; and since this is the case, the flag of peace floating freely on heaven's breezes, and the written and published proclamation of God's word and ordinances, together with the cherished communion of the Spirit of God in the soul, will awaken the sensibility of the ear and eye of the soul, in such measure as to hear and see, and receive due comfort from the assuring testimony of God, doubly sure. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed." "O thou afflicted, tossed with the tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundation with sapphires." "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."

V. In the fifth and last place, and by way of application, consider that Christ is the treasure-house of these blessings and that it is through him they all flow. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Mark now, here, the words making up the name of our blessed Saviour,—“Lord, Jesus, Christ.” Peace, and all the blessings which flow from justification, are not all, or any one of them, singly through ourselves in any way, neither by our own merit nor by our own efforts. It is all of grace. And it is all through Jesus Christ. And this the justified soul is ever anxious to acknowledge, without any reservation. “Through our Lord Jesus Christ,” gives a clue to the origin and channel and abiding residence of our peace. The glory of our peace is with Christ, and discovered in his divine qualifications and abilities as a Saviour. The word “our” denotes our right in him by grace, and his right in us, “My beloved is mine and I am his.” My beloved is mine and his desire is toward me; the word Lord denotes his propriety in us, and that by grant to him by the Father; Jesus, denotes that he is our personal Saviour, clothed with our humanity, the Immanuel God-man, in our midst; Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah, proclaims and publishes to all the world, as well as the Church, his qualifications and accomplishments, as prophet, priest, and king, as the altar and sacrifice and head of his Church, and king of glory and the only begotten, full of grace

and truth, one with the Father, and whom the Father heareth always. It is through him every blessing flows to us, and it is through him that God is at peace with us, and we are at abiding peace with God through faith that is in his name.

The more light the soul receives the more will its peace be. For our peace does not depend in the relation of our justified state on ourselves, but on God. What the soul in its unrest requires to do then, is to examine into the foundations of its faith; to cast about and ascertain its security in Christ. The troubled conscience is referred for a full settlement of all doubts, fears, and grievances to the blood of him who has settled all such transactions with a broken and enraged law, at terrible disadvantage and odds against him;—His resources he found within himself; and now there is no murmur, or whisper of suspicion, or gainsaying of his finished righteousness thenceforth and forever. All enmity has ceased against him on that score; the wide territories of heaven and earth and hell are his own, and that by virtue of his conquests. The pangs of his holy soul have saved us from eternal death in hell for ever.

During certain eclipses of the sun, philosophers have observed that certain important changes come over the face of nature: vegetation droops; the healthful colours and tints of earth and sky turn sickly and sullen; and not a few of the smaller animals, after cowering and despairing for shelter whereunto to flee, die:—if such is the effect of the hiding of the sun's countenance, which smiles upon us from the natural heavens, what will the effect be when the sun of righteousness frowns in his full and unrestrained vengeance upon this wicked world? Even then, when the wicked shall cry to the hills and to the mountains to fall upon them and to hide them from the face of Christ their judge, the righteous will stand unmoved by all that may be coming on the earth;—they have already taken refuge within the munition of rocks;—they have sheltered themselves in the clefts of the Rock of Ages;—they have availed themselves of a righteousness not their own;—and even on the judgment day they can challenge every adversary, with the words they have learned of God's word and Spirit, by faith in the blood of their surety: "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth;" and even then "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever!"

In conclusion, sinner, be advised to flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. God is waiting to be

gracious. He will forgive if you apply in time, and in the name of Christ. Believer, rejoice evermore, that you and God are friends, and that your name is written in heaven. Amen.

SERMON II.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Rom. viii. 1.

THERE is contained in this verse nearly a repetition, only in another form, and with more of personal assurance, of what had already been said in the first verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle. The apostle in this verse and chapter has arrived at a more advanced stage of gracious soul experience; and to this his doctrine applies, as, indeed his doctrine creates, by the blessing of the Spirit of God, that wholesome and comforting assurance.

It shall be our object, in the *first* place, to elucidate the form of connection of this verse with what precedes; in the *second* place, the authority on which the doctrine of the text hinges; in the *third* place, explain what is the impression intended to be conveyed by saying that there is "no condemnation" to such as are in Christ Jesus; and in the *fourth* and *last* place, the nature and extent of believers' security in Christ.

I. In the first place, it is necessary to elucidate the connection of the text under present consideration with what precedes. The apostle's style is of a very high order, finished, and withal bold, frank, and honest, neither taking advantage, nor giving undue advantage. This treatment of any subject will stand the test and scrutiny of all ages. A favourite method of his is, to prove, and then, to explain and apply as he travels on in the field of divine truth. He proved himself by all means, in his writings even, to be the great apostle of the Gentiles. There is great, impregnable strength, in his compositions. He was in every way a man raised up of God for a special work in his church.

These brief remarks may tend to throw some light, of an important nature, on what is to be said, on the connection of the verse of our text with what precedes. It is our object to

ascertain the connection. Our text is a conclusion arrived at from something preceding. But from what verse, or chapter, or part of the apostle's discussion? It is sometimes by commentators connected with the concluding verse of the preceding chapter, sometimes with part of the seventh chapter; but the soundest commentators, and this is evidently the correct view, connect it as a general conclusion or inference with the whole previous discussion, commencing at the beginning of the epistle, and ending at the concluding verse of the seventh chapter.

One of the best of Grecian orators, being naturally timid and indistinct in the utterance at first, succeeded in rising to his full accomplishments and success as an orator, by correcting and cultivating his voice, manner, and gesture, in reciting his own productions, and those of others, masters in the art, at the highest pitch of his voice and without restraint upon his person: and for this purpose he could always, on such occasions, retire to the bosom of some lonely wood or grove. To this mode of practical training he attributed his after success. Now the apostle, who was accomplished both as a Christian and an orator,—for his soul was imbued with the spirit of the religion he professed,—disdains not to view the whole field of discussion, and not exactly in the way of recapitulation; but, in the way of the most profound, and at the same time most refined constructive reasoning, that the art can supply, he draws his inference, and in the act gaining a step, he rises that additional degree higher in the vision of his faith. Like the eagle, which with every beat of his mighty wings, creates a tide of air which helps to supply every successive stroke of his wings with additional force; the apostle in the spirit of inspiration finds his words swell with the wind of the Spirit, and gathering in them the cumulative strength and force of the journey that has been travelled, he breaks out with the triumphant words, in some part of his course, nearing the haven of the blest, where there is abundance of the sunshine of righteousness, and the air is exquisitely perfumed and peace reigns! "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." And now to reflect, it at once appears satisfactory to say, without any remark, that such words cannot, in their connection, depend upon what is said in the previous verse, or a part even of the preceding chapter. The connection then is that which has just been given.

II. In the *second* place, consider the authority on which the doctrine of the text hinges. What assured queen Esther that her life was safe in the king's presence, and surrounded with his executioners, was the king's favourable regard to her, signified by the sign of his extended royal sceptre. What gave assurance to the mind of Manoah's wife, that the Lord did not design to kill them, *i.e.* herself and her husband, was, that the Lord was pleased to receive a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at their hands; and that he had shewed them, and revealed unto them in an intimate and kindly manner his secrets. What afforded the apostle, here in our text, the best authority; and what affords the sorrowing, but hopeful soul, the best authority that there is no condemnation to such as are in Christ, is, the love of God and his good regard to the soul. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." This is the groundwork of all our hopes, and the chief authority for the confidence expressed in the words of the text.

III. In the *third* place, let us enquire and explain what is the impression intended to be conveyed by saying that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. In the first verse of the fifth chapter the apostle lays down the positive doctrine that we are justified by faith in Christ; here he stands upon the sure ground of that truth, and dwells with special delight upon the doctrine, and draws a farther inference closely connected with the first position,—the one is the counterpart of the other; first, he shews that by our justification through faith in Christ, we enjoy peace with God, and secondly, he shews that there is no condemnation possible to us in Christ. Christ Jesus and his perfect righteousness are his only boast, for in Christ Jesus he meets with God, and God with him in a right happy and truly glorious manner, and there is a friendship established that is memorable, and

strengthens the soul with an abiding hope of life which is in him and from him graciously given to us.

———"Lord of unsleeping love,
From everlasting Thou! We shall not die."—*Coleridge*.

And it is declared, in God's love is life, his loving-kindness is better than life. "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastised me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord."

To be in Christ implies the renewing work of God, for "if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; all old things have passed away, all things have become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Now, let it be no more a matter of wonder, that the work is a great and glorious one, for God is the author of the work in all its parts. He quickens us by his Spirit, and makes us new creatures in a day of mighty power. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth;" he gives us the gracious gift of true and living faith, whereby we believe in Jesus with ineffable delight, and are found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; he receives or accepts our persons, and our humble services, and assures us that from henceforth we are not to be under the law, nor receive the unsparing treatment of the law, but that we are put under the rule and discipline of grace; for it hath happened that the law cannot confer life on a soul that is a sinner, and that by the deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified.

If we were again dragged into the power, and under the dominion of the law, away from Christ, or in common interest with Christ in the soul, it would spoil our peace instantly, and we would be made partakers of the penalty and anger which pursues the transgressor. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them; and it is part of our redemption and comfort of soul, that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is

written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Thus we see, that we are shut in to the faith of Christ's righteousness, on every side; out of him there is no safety; in him it is all peace, as in the bosom of God. It is indeed into the divine bosom we are received; there we are warmed, and cherished, and fondled, and blessed; for inasmuch as Christ was received back from the dead into the bosom of his heavenly Father, we too are made partakers of his grace and holiness and joy.

It is proper for us here to take a view of Christ's excellencies, as the Lord our righteousness, and the righteousness of God for our salvation. *Firstly*, He is both God and man; he has these two distinct natures in his own person for ever; he has then the same holiness and glory with the Father, and the same nature as the children of Adam, yet without sin. Wonderful alliance! Yet how suitable! For by this measure, the mediator can lay his hands on both God and man, and reconcile them by his perfect obedience and death; his blood at once melts and purifies the sinner, and appeases the anger of his Father; it is then easy of comprehension, that he had love to man and God, equal love and sympathy to God and man, each respectively, as God infinitely deserved his regard, and man stood in need of his pity; the infinite regard of divine holiness, and infinite pity towards the sinner, found their proper and suitable meeting place, in the person, and in the holy and loving bosom of Jesus the Son of God, who made peace through the blood of his cross, and established an honourable and everlasting reconciliation. *Secondly*, the excellency of Christ as Mediator and Redeemer appears in this regard, viz., that God's faithfulness to all his word and promises appears in him. He promised death to the sinner, Christ presents unto us the fulfilment of that sentence; he hastens to demonstrate in all its awfulness, the faithfulness of God by submitting himself instead of the sinner. He carries thus the death of the sinner, and the judgment of God against sinners, that broke covenant about with him in his person and doctrine.

But then again, God in his great love wherewith he loved us, promised life, righteousness, and salvation to us, when in ourselves we were undone. He laid our help upon one that was mighty. He anointed him with his holy oil. His

hand and his arm were with him, and made him strong. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." "In Christ's life, the divine law, which is the standard of righteousness, was drawn out to the uttermost; it exhibited the perfection of love to God and man, and in the laying down of his life, in obedience to the special commandment of his Heavenly Father, it was fully consummated. It was an obedience unto death to expiate sin, such obedience as he was under no obligation to perform for himself, because he had no sin of his own, and consequently he must have acted as the substitute and representative of sinners. By his obedience he perfectly fulfilled the law in all its requirements, and answered all its demands upon his guilty people whom he represented, so that his obedience is placed to their account, and in virtue of it, through faith in him they are constituted righteous, they are made the righteousness of God in him, they are justified, or absolved from guilt and punishment, and entitled to eternal life with Jesus Christ as its reward."—*Jones' Bib. Cyclo.*

We could easily enlarge on the excellency of Christ as Mediator and Redeemer or Saviour. It has been made to appear that God's glory has received full satisfaction in Christ; that both covenants get their full complement in him in death and life, to the benefit of his own people; that the covenant of grace and life stands in him for ever in his infinite righteousness, through which God's glory is made great; and that we may truly say of our Lord Jesus and of God the Father in him, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song; he also is become my salvation."

"Jesus! thy Robe of Righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress,
Midst flaming worlds in this arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand on that great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Then, this shall be my only plea,
'Jesus hath lived and died for me.'"—*Carnick.*

IV. In the fourth place, consider the nature and extent of the believer's security in Christ. Those who are in Christ are perfectly safe. Their salvation is absolutely secured to

them. They are past condemnation, and they can never any more come into condemnation. Christ has undertaken for them, and he is able to save them, and will save them. He gave himself for them, and they live through him. He is the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gave his life for his sheep. "I am the good shepherd," he says, and "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." The extent of the security is infinite and unqualified. God has engaged for us. Almighty strength is in his grasp, with which he has laid hold of us. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting righteousness and strength; in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory. This is what eases us of our burdens, and makes us rejoice in glory before his presence.

Bunyan has it, in his dream, that Christian running from hell, that gaped with wide mouth for him, met in his path-way with a hill, where he was closely hemmed in on either side with a wall, and that wall was called salvation. Up this way he ran against increasing difficulties, still labouring under that burden that had so long wearied him, until he came up to the foot of a CROSS that stood there, and there his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and tumbled out of sight into the sepulchre. This filled his soul with such wonder, surprise, and delight, that the tears ran down his cheeks while he cried to himself: "He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death." At this moment three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with "peace be to thee;" the first said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third "set a mark on his forehead," and gave him a roll, with a seal upon it, which he bade him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate. Here Christian is represented to have been so overjoyed that he gave three leaps, and went on singing in praise of Christ:—

"Blessed Cross! blessed Sepulchre, blessed rather be
The man that there was put to shame for me."

Such is the experience of justified souls. And being justified, they are sanctified also in the name of the Lord Jesus.

and by the Spirit of our God. Whom he justifies, them he also sanctifies. Holiness becometh his saints. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. This holiness the believer receives from Christ. The believer walks not after the flesh but after the spirit. He is under law to Christ, and the language of that law is, Be ye holy for I am holy, mortify every sin, perfect holiness in the fear of God, put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

In conclusion. *1st*, Unconverted soul, take hold of Christ. Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him. *2nd*, Believer, rejoice, your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake, and your name is written in heaven. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Our duty is love, obedience, and holiness. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."—*Amen.*